DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 249 808 FL 014 637

AUTHOR de Herrera, Betty Phillips
TITLE Teaching English as a Foreign Language to the Virually Handicapped.
PUB DATE Oct 84
NOTE 10p.; Paper is based on a talk given at the Annual Convention of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (18th, Houston, TX, March 6-11, 1984).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Journal Articles (080) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
JOURNAL CIT MEXTESOL Journal; v8 n3 p15-23 Oct 1984

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Blindness; Class Activities; Classroom Communication; Classroom Environment; Classroom Techniques; Empathy; *English (Second Language); Films; Foreign Countries; *Information Sources; Interviews; *Mainstreaming; Organizations (Groups); *Second Language Instruction; Student Attitudes; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Student Relationship; Tutoring; *Visual Impairments
IDENTIFIERS *Mexico (Mexico City)

ABSTRACT

Techniques for teachers to use in mainstreaming visually handicapped students in instruction of English as a second language are discussed. They include: (1) having an initial student interview to explore the student's knowledge of braille and gather other relevant information about student skills; (2) not developing negative attitudes or becoming overprotective; (3) providing activities that the student can participate in comfortably; (4) having the entire class be blindfolded through all the normal class activities to develop sighted student empathy; and (5) speaking clearly and precisely and encouraging others to do the same. Additional out-of-class assistance can include providing tutoring; encouraging attendance at English-language movies, clubs, and private English classes; and exploiting the other senses with clay, fabrics, and other substances. A variety of organizations and information sources are available in the United States and Mexico City to provide further ideas and assistance. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

MEXTESOL Journal
Vol 8, No 3 October 1984

TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE TO THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED[1]

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

MEXTESOL

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Betty Phillips de Herrera

An Overview

Teaching English as a foreign language to VH students in schools in Mexico City is a challenge. It is a challenge because this area of knowledge is relatively new to EFL teachers. Specific guidelines, techniques, and methods have not been fully or deeply explored. The challenge is stronger when VH students are placed in classes with sighted students.

A recent study by this author examines some of the problems EFL teachers encounter. Having VH students in classes with sighted students reveals that even though the task is difficult, a dedicated teacher can be successful if certain guidelines and techniques are followed, both in and out of the classroom.

The following items are suggested for use by the EFL teacher when mainstreaming a VH student:

1) Having a brief interview with the VH student. The interview reveals the student's knowledge of braille and other relevant information that can be used by the EFL teacher to help make the teaching experience more beneficial.

2) The teacher can create a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom by not developing a negative or disagreeable

[1] This paper was the basis for a talk given at the TESOL International Convention in Houston, Texas (March 1984).

ED249808

FL014 637

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

attitude toward the student. The teacher should not be over-protective of the student nor should the student be isolated or forgotten as a member of the class. The teacher should not make the students' handicaps so obvious so as to make them feel sensitive about their conditions.

3) The teacher should provide activities that the student can participate in comfortably. The student may be included in some of the more difficult activities along with the sighted students, if there has been a prior explanation. It is important that the classroom work run as smoothly as possible.

4) In order to help the whole class understand the circumstances that VH students undergo, the entire class can be blindfolded and taken through all of the normal classroom activities. Blindfolds can be an important teaching tool because this will make the sighted students aware of what it is like to experience blindness.

5) The teacher should speak as clearly and precisely as possible, and the other classroom students should be encouraged to do the same.

Below are some additional out-of-classroom activities that may be of some help to VH students:

a) The teacher may be able to provide the VH student with a tutor to assist him/her with classroom assignments. Tutors may be fellow classmates or a practice teacher.

b) Movies may be useful. Hearing the language spoken in movies may be used to enhance listening. Encourage the VH students to attend local or special showings. The more VH students hear English spoken by other persons, the better they will be in regular classes.

c) Encourage the student to attend English clubs, conversation clubs, or sing-along clubs.

d) Encourage the VH student to attend private English classes that are available at many of the rehabilitation centers. These are usually free and very good.

e) The other senses (touching and smelling) may be exploited if teachers provide certain objects such as: modeling clay, fabrics, sandpaper, fruits or vegetables.

Each of the above activities will contribute to the VH student's capacity to be more responsive in the classroom. These suggested methods are simple and can be tried without too much extra effort on the part of the teacher. Patience, creativity and adaptability are essential elements for a good EFL teacher. Teachers can not afford to be reluctant or restrictive if they want to be successful in their approach to teaching EFL to visually handicapped persons in classes with sighted students.

Organizations of Interest to Teachers

American Foundation for the Blind, Inc.
15 West Sixteenth Street
New York, New York 10011
(212) 924-0420

Provides a wide variety of services for visually handicapped persons, the public, and the professional. Promotes the development of education, rehabilitation, and social welfare for blind and multiply handicapped children and adults. Programs for the partially sighted are included in educational services.

Conducts and stimulates research to determine the most effective methods of serving visually handicapped persons. Provides

professional consultation to governmental and voluntary agencies. Conducts agency and community surveys to assist in the expansion and improvement of specialized services. Conducts workshops and training courses for professional personnel. Provides legislative consultation.

Operates the M. C. Migel Memorial Library, a special reference library on blindness. Publishes books, monographs, leaflets, and periodicals in conventional print, recorded, and braille forms. Manufactures talking books. Develops, manufactures, and sells special aids and appliances for use by blind persons. Has public education program.

American Printing House for the Blind, Inc.
1839 Frankfort Avenue
Louisville, Kentucky 40206
(502) 895-2405

National organization for the production of literature and the manufacture of educational aids for the visually handicapped. Since 1879, through the "Federal Act to Promote the Education of the Blind," receives an annual appropiation from Congress to provide textbooks and educational aids for all students attending schools and/or special funds donated by the public; publishes braille and talking book editions of the Reader's Digest, and a weekly talking book edition of Newsweek.

Publishes braille books, music, and magazines; large-type textbooks, talking books and magazines; cassette tapes and educational tape recordings. Manufactures special educational aids for blind and visually handicapped persons.

Maintains an educational research and development program concerned with not only educational procedures and methods, but also the development of educational aids.

The American Foundation for the Overseas Blind
15 W. 16th Street
New York, N.Y. 10011

Association for Education of the Visually Handicapped
919 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107
(215) 923-7555

Formerly the American Association of Instructors of the Blind. A membership organization open to persons professionally concerned with or interested in the education, guidance, vocational rehabilitation, or occupational placement of visually handicapped persons. Assists in efforts to improve material and methods of teaching visually handicapped persons, and to expand their opportunities to play an active role in society.

The Catholic Guild
International Center for the Blind
New York, N.Y. 10010

Division for the Visually Handicapped
Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, Virginia 22091
(703) 620-3660

A professional organization of teachers, school administrators, and others concerned with children who require special services. Publishes periodicals, books, and other materials on teaching the exceptional child.

The Hadley School for the Blind
700 Elm Street
P.O. Box 299
Winnetka, Illinois 60093

Helen Keller International
22 W. 17th Street
New York, N.Y. 10011

The Library of Congress
Washington, D.C. 20452

National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc.
79 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10016
(212) 684-3505

Through state affiliates, conducts a program of public and professional education, research, industrial, and community services to prevent blindness. Services include promotion and support of local glaucoma screening programs, preschool vision testing, industrial eye safety, collection of statistical and other data on nature and extent of causes of blindness and defective vision, improvement of environmental conditions affecting eye health in schools and colleges, and dissemination of information on low vision aids and clinics.

World Council for the Welfare of the Blind
58 Avenue Bosquet
75007 Paris, France

Newsletter published in English, Spanish and French.

Organizations of Interest to Teachers in Mexico City for Visually Handicapped

Instituto Nacional para la Rehabilitación de Niños Ciegos y Debiles Visuales (Directora: Dra. Antonia García Medina)
Viena # 121
Col. Del Carmen, Coyoacán
México, D.F.

Comité Internacional Pro-Ciegos
(Directora: Joanne Covo)
Mariano Azuela # 218
México, D.F.
Tel.: 541-34-88

Escuela de Ciegos "IGNACIO TRIGUEROS"
Mixcalco # 6
México, D.F.

Centro de Habilitación e Integración Para Invidentes
Calle Ferreterías y 24 de Abril
Col. Ampliación 20 de Noviembre
México, D.F.

Escuela CHIPI/Kindergarten
Maestra Flor
Coyoacán
México, D.F.
Tel.: 658-41-15

Suggested Reading

BOOKS

Caroll, Reverend Thomas J. Blindness: What it is, What it does and How to live with it. Little Brown and Company, 1961.

Corn, Anne Lesley & Iris Martínez. When you have a Visually Handicapped child in your classroom. American Foundation for the Blind.

Lowenfeld, Berthold. The Visually Handicapped Child in School. John Day, 1975.

Scott, Robert. The Makings of Blind Men. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1969.

ARTICLES

Curry, R.G. "Using LEA to teach Blind Children to Read." Reading Teacher. December, 1975.

McGinnis, Amy R. "Functional Linguistics Strategies of Blind Children." Visual Impairment and Blindness. May, 1981.

Synder, Therese, C.S.W. & Marcia Kesselman. "Teaching English as a Second Language to Blind People." The New Outlook for the Blind. June, 1972, (66) 6, 210-213.

Informants

Prof. Antonio Cabrera. A blind EFL/ESL teacher at La Salle University in Mexico City. Mr. Cabrera has been blind since his early childhood and has accomplished many outstanding feats as a blind ESL/EFL Teacher in Mexico City. He is one of the founders of MEXTESOL.

Prof. Joanne Covo. Professor at the Universidad de las Américas and Director of the Comité Internacional Pro-Ciegos.